

## THE NEW SKIRT LINE.

More Fulness Seen in the Latest Models.

CHANGE IN THE BLOUSE, ALSO.

The Pointed Bodice and Girdle in Rising Favor.

Differing Opinions of the Authorities About the Skirt—The Coming Model—The Hip Yoke, the Full Skirt and the Trimmed Skirt—Distinct Vogue for Flounces—As to the Length of Skirts—The Straight Front Pompadour Bodice—Wonderful Buttons—Novelties in Trimmings—The Negligee Gown.

The conservative woman has fallen upon troublous times. Modes have not changed radically in the last few months, and yet, slowly and insidiously, significant hints of coming revolutions have been



creeping into the open. One is not quite sure how far the developments will go, and the more one reads the fashion journals the more chaotic one's ideas upon chiffons become.

There, for instance, is that vexed question of the skirt. One eloquent authority congratulates women upon the fact that the skirt silhouette has not changed. Another announces calmly that the skirt full from the waist band has been accepted without a murmur.

"Trotter" skirts are on all street frocks," says a Paris correspondent.



for the severest of morning promenade frocks," says another.

The bodice furnishes its share of contradiction. "The pouch has disappeared in Paris," says one foreign writer. "All bodices still blouse, save in the exceptional Pompadour model," says another.

What is a conscientious American woman to do, when doctors of fashion disagree. Probably the most satisfactory method of settling one's doubts lies in an examination of the French model gowns sent over by the latest Parisian houses. Even there one will find grave differences in opinion, easily conflicting testimony, but



what is wanted for by any one of the great men cannot be far out of the way for this season.

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and French gowns are often exaggerated in their emphasis of advanced modes. The full skirt illustrates this point. Unquestionably it is the coming skirt. As a matter of fact, it is already here.

In the conference at which the most famous of the Parisian dressmakers meet each spring, the full skirt was unanimously approved; but now it remains to be seen how radically and how rapidly the fashionable women will obey the ruling. Laws laid down by the autocrats of the Rue de la Paix have often been modified by the prejudices of the mondaines.

For soft and sheer materials the merits of the full skirt are obvious and will, perhaps, be acknowledged by all save very fat women, but when it comes to less supple and graceful materials, there will be diversity of opinion. The severely plain, close-fitting skirt has already been dismissed from consideration by the fastidious.

First, fine tucks and plaits crept into the general design. The plait deepened and became more pronounced, though the round the upper part of the skirt was preserved.

Then came the skirt yoke with pronounced fulness below, and that idea is still with us, but the enthusiasm with which it was hailed has somewhat subsided. First there was protest because an all-around skirt yoke shortened the skirt length unbecomingly. In deference to this objection, the skirt with full length side or box plaits, front or back, and with a flat yoke merely over the hips was devised, and this model

Now that cloth and even velvet are so wondrously soft and supple, this idea is not so terrifying as it was in earlier days, and the full modes may adopt it; but at present the conservative woman will do well to accept the full skirt for her crepe, fine voiles, mousselines, etc., but to retain somewhat close hip lines in her heavier street frocks.

One thing is beyond dispute in the skirt realm. The trimmed skirt is dominant—not the shaped and trimmed waist of old, although that is still shown under various guises—but the more elaborately trimmed skirt.

On tailor gowns there is a growing tendency toward continuing vertical lines of bodice trimmings down the length of the skirt. This idea may be developed in braiding or other ornamentation merely down the front, or the lines of plaits all around the skirt may be defined by the trimming.

One of the illustrations shows a front breadth trimming in spiral braiding. Passementerie ornaments, often connected by cords, are set down the sides of a plain front breadth, the same ornaments being

applied to the blouse or jacket. Lines of tabs of braid or silk or of narrow velvet ribbon run out upon plain front breadths, from under deep side plaits, and are finished with tiny buttons.

Outside the tailor province, there is practically no limit to the vagaries in skirt trimming. Braiding, piping, ruching, milliners' folds, shirtings, tuckings, lace embroideries, passementerie—all run riot slightly draped, while full flounces or plaings appear in the back.

Flounces, too, though of a very subdued and chastened sort, fashioned with tiny plaits and not bouffant, are shown in place of a hip yoke on many house gowns and evening gowns, usually in company with the pointed bodice and high girdle, which threaten the supremacy of the pouched blouse.

Flounced skirts have a distinct vogue. The flounce may cover only the lower part of the skirt and be shirred on full, with deep headings, or, particularly in the case of lace, festooned, or they may cover the whole skirt. The triple flounce skirt is a decided favorite in soft materials, as is the triple pleated skirt and this model gives an opportunity for the introduction of effective trimmings around the bottom of each flounce.

Some of the most charming models in these triple flounce skirts have the flounces cut around their edges into deep scallops or points and finished with silk button-holing, lace or narrow fringe.

The popular Greek key design, carried out in narrow ribbon or in lace insertion, is a successful trimming for the deep flounces, and here is a sketch of a simple evening frock of mousseline the skirt flounces and deep border of which have this Greek key design for their only trimmings. For the pleated triple skirts straight bands or designs of lace are inset between the materials.

The flounced skirts, while picturesque and becoming for the tall slender woman, were never designed for the woman whose legs are short or whose flesh is "too, too solid." If she must lead fashion's van and adopt the full skirt, let her keep to the long pleat lines, or to skirts such as are shown in some of the latest and most authoritative models, which are merely mounted to the belt in plaits or gathers and fall full and untrammelled from the waist line.

The full skirt need not necessarily be unbecoming, even to a stout figure, if it is well cut and made in clinging material, and if the bodice girdle is cleverly handled, but the modest, flounced skirt is for the woman who has slenderness and length, and that fact should be accepted with resignation by the fat and short sisterhood.

The skirt topic seems almost inexhaustible, for new skirt ideas appear everywhere one looks. One note in the general which may become more pronounced when the season of heavier materials approaches,

is, so far, perhaps the most satisfactory among those accepted for the walking gown.

Many of the artists of the Rue de la Paix are opposed even to this yoke concession, and they have a certain amount of reason on their side. They say what is perfectly true, that not one woman in hundred is perfectly proportioned around the hips, that one hip is invariably larger or higher than the other and that the hip yoke accentuates this defect. One dressmaker, especially famous, for his skirts, says

that the dressmaker will know his way, but for the present, women may wear hip-yoke skirts with a certain amount of being satisfied, even if the defects of her figure are being magnified.

Even the most radical of the dressmakers, while endorsing the skirt fulness to the belt, usually when handling the heavier materials, resort to various devices for confining the fulness somewhat snugly over the hips; but again and over and over the conservative woman will find evidence of strong conviction to support one in wearing a frock conspicuously different from the thing adopted by one's friends.

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A clever adaptation of the painter idea, already mentioned, shows a sheer skirt pulled or pleated at the waist, but with the fulness held in loosely across the hips by bands of ribbon, the extremities of which are finished by little rosettes. Cords with pendant ornaments at the ends are sometimes used in place of the ribbons.

And after all this skirt discussion nothing has been said about that puzzling problem of skirt length. Careful investigation of modes Parisian which are, in the main, the authoritative modes, discloses the fact that there is considerable latitude, or rather longitude, allowed in this matter of skirt length, but a few general laws are laid down.

The walking skirt in its most fashionable form is a most inconvenient garment, which is short only in name. The skirt intended strictly for outing wear may clear the ground in uncompromising fashion and guarantee its wearer freedom of motion, but the ordinary walking skirt is round, and barely escapes the ground all the way around. Often it does not even accomplish this, but barely touches back sides and front.

Of course, this skirt is bound to frazzle around the bottom and catch the dirt, but on the other hand the really long street skirt is practically a thing of the past, and this round skirt is, at least, better than the trained skirt for street wear. Moreover, the long short skirt—if the full may be forgiven—is more becoming to the average woman than the more sensible short

skirt, and that fact compensates for much wear and tear.

Dressy frocks retain their trained length in many instances, especially when intended solely for house and evening wear, but even here one notes a slight inclination toward shortening in the back, and youthful gowns show only the slightest of swoops. If the full skirt, the pointed bodice, etc., gain ground, the shortened skirt back will be inevitable.

Now a word as to the bodices. There is no truth in the statement that the pouched blouse has disappeared from the best Parisian gowns. It is still in evidence upon, perhaps, two-thirds of the models, but it no longer reigns alone, and there are signs that it will lose still more of its supremacy as the season advances.

So long as the corset is just what it is, there is no disputing the fact that the drooping front blouse is the most practical and becoming of bodices, and it will certainly be correct throughout the season, but it

with incrustations of cloth or mousseline or linen, lace whose designs are picked out with colored wool. There seems to be no end to the variations upon the one central theme.

Embroidery plays as important a part as ever on the modish frock, and while hand embroidery intended exclusively for the gown it adorns is the top notch of elegance, there are numbers of embroidered band and motif trimmings in the shops that can be used with excellent effect.

Russian cross-stitch embroideries on silk or linen tulle, Turkish and Bulgarian embroideries on cloth, linen and even upon tulle, and Pompadour embroideries upon everything from pique to silk gauze, are all at the service of the woman who cannot afford to have her frock or suit embroidered especially for her.

Fringes have unmistakably gained a hold upon popular favor here, as they did

in the case of the French and English

wardrobes. There have always been American women who wore stunning tea gowns and boudoir gowns, but they were the exception. Now such daintiness is accepted as a matter of course among fashionable women.

A proof of this fact is given in the number of elaborate negligees displayed in the shops, and particularly in the shops of the exclusive importers. Nothing is too costly or elaborate for these garments. There is a preference at the moment for the use of transparent sheer materials in their making, and the exquisite flowered chiffons, gauzes, mousselines and nets are fashioned into the most feminine and picturesque

career. It appears in a host of materials and forms, and the elegant orders a scarf to match her new frock, quite as a matter of course.

In chiffon velvet or soft silk the scarf is attractive, but it is its flimsy, diaphanous form that it is altogether charming, and if a beautiful lace écharpe is out of the question because of its price, the scarf of chiffon, mousseline or gauze may be almost as effective. There is everything in the way one wears these graceful things. Upon an awkward woman they degenerate into absurd strings or wads, but when they cling correctly around sloping shoulders and float picturesquely over the gown front as they should they are deliciously feminine.

It would pay a woman whose soul is not above chiffons to practise wearing a scarf before her mirror until she has learned the trick, and there are grandmothers in many homes who could give their self-sufficient granddaughters tips upon graceful shawl wearing, which has in tailor-made days become almost a lost art.

The airy, floating note of the season's fashions shows itself in unexpected forms. Gauze ruffles, scarfs, fichus trim frocks of heavier material in the same color.

Other dress trimmings multiply from day to day, and gain in beauty as they multiply. Laces, of course, are in the lead, but of laces we have already sung the praises many a time. The fad for colored laces increases, and from the colored laces in Hungarian effects, in yak and in wool, to the softly tinted chintilly and Alençon, lace with a touch of color has its vogue. There is a craze for all of the heavy antique laces, and lace combinations, some of them bizarre in effect, are more popular than ever.

Then there are the laces ornamented with opalescent or moonlight paillettes, with jewels, with silk embroidery, laces

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The corset belt must be very carefully folded and fitted and the jewelled buttons and long buckles which often ornament it are things of beauty. A new black velvet covered buckle for such girdles has been introduced by one Paris maker and is sometimes even more effective than the ornate or similar buckle that is more common.

The buttons of the season are among the loveliest, and in many cases the most extravagant of the dress accessories. Rhinestone buttons equal in design and setting to the best old paste jewels are shown in profusion.

Cabochon stones in all colors are set in beautiful metal work. Opals and pearls are imitated for button use with marvellous success. The greens of chrysoprase and jade are particularly favored in combination with dull gold or silver.

Gun metal set with jewels or plain in finish, buttons of wrought gold or silver, the old fashioned hand painted china buttons, buttons with dangle jewel or metal pendants—all these are in evidence and on the model frocks one sees buttons, covered with cloth, silk, linen or other material and embroidered to match the coloring of the frock.

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